

CLAIMS

We claim:

1. A multimedia system, comprising:
a bulk decoder coupled to a network, the bulk decoder decoding data received from the network and transmitting the decoded data to an interconnect; and
an output device coupled to the interconnect for accepting the decoded data.
2. The system of claim 1, wherein the bulk decoder comprises:
a central processor;
a demultiplexer coupled to the central processor;
at least one decoder coupled to the demultiplexer; and
a multiplexer coupled to the at least one decoder.
3. The system of claim 2, further comprising a processor coupled between the network and the interconnect for converting data in various data formats into data represented by one protocol.
4. The system of claim 1, wherein the output device comprises a desktop unit.
5. The system of claim 1, wherein the output device comprises a storage.
6. The system of claim 1, further comprising a plurality of bulk decoders coupled to the network and the interconnect.
7. A network system, comprising:
a server coupled to a network;
a bulk decoder coupled to the network, the bulk decoder receiving signal from the network, the bulk decoder being controlled by the server; and
at least one device coupled to the bulk decoder for accepting decoded signal

from the decoder.

8. The network system of claim 7, wherein the bulk decoder comprises:
a processor; and
at least one decoder for decoding the signal.

9. The network system of claim 8, further comprising:
a demultiplexer coupled to the processor and the at least one decoder for
demultiplexing the signal; and
a multiplexer coupled to the processor and the at least one decoder for
multiplexing the decoded signal.

10. The network system of claim 7, further comprising a plurality of bulk decoders
coupled to the network.

11. A bulk decoder for decoding signals received from a network and distributing
decoded signals to corresponding output devices through an interconnect, comprising:
a central processor;
a demultiplexer coupled to the central processor;
a multiplexer coupled to the central processor; and
at least one decoder coupled to the demultiplexer and the multiplexer.

12. The bulk decoder of claim 11, further comprising a processor for converting
signals in various data formats into data represented by a single protocol.

13. The bulk decoder of claim 12, wherein the processor comprises a video
processor.

14. The bulk decoder of claim 12, wherein the processor comprises an audio
processor.

15. A method for sharing decoding resources in a network system, comprising:
transmitting a signal to a network;
decoding the signal using a bulk decoder coupled to the network; and
transmitting decoded data to an interconnect.

16. The method of claim 15, further comprising controlling the bulk decoder using a server coupled to the network.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein the signal comprises intermixed data signals, the decoding comprises:

demultiplexing the signal to obtain individual data signals;
decoding the individual data signals; and
multiplexing the decoded individual data signals.

18. The method of claim 17, further comprising transmitting the multiplexed decoded individual data signals to corresponding output devices coupled to the interconnect.

19. The method of claim 17, further comprising representing the decoded individual data signals by one protocol.

20. The method of claim 15, further comprising adjusting the number of bulk decoders coupled to the network in accordance with a system load.